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STRUM'S

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A NEW START

By E. D. MERCER
(Editor's note: The following story is presented as a special feature for our readers. It was written by E. D. Mercer of 403 East 224th street who has been writing for five years.)
(All rights reserved by E. D. Mercer)

Albert was a little slow finding the lunch truck when the whistle blew, as it was his first day on the job. He noticed several girls from the office ahead of him in the line.

"He thought: It has been a long time since I have had a date.

The public address system was out of order; had been all morning; and it sounded horrible saying, "Mr. Roberts, telephone please."

Albert put his hands over his ears saying to the man behind him, "That thing is driving me crazy. Why don't they fix it?"

"I notice they have changed voices since the whistle blew," the man said. The one that has been on all morning is a witch. I wonder where she hides her broom."

"It is not the woman's fault that thing is out of adjustment, I could fix it in ten minutes," Albert replied.

The girl in front of him turned around and said, "For your information, Superman, there have been two experts working on it all morning."

"They are experts, alright! Just listen to that thing," Albert replied.

Turning to the other man she said, "The 'Old Witch' is very modern. She has a folding broom she carries in her purse."

"So you are the one," he said. "I am sorry, miss. But that thing is driving everybody in the yard crazy."

She smiled and said, "I know, especially me."

"This boy said he could fix it in ten minutes," the other man remarked.

Then she turned to Albert and asked, "What are you doing in carpenter overalls if you know so much about it?"

"I am a carpenter," Albert told her. "I learned to adjust a PA system in the army. That was my special assignment in Korea."

"Well, I wish you would fix this one."

"I would if they will let me," he replied.

"When you get your lunch, come with me and I will ask Mr. Roberts to let you fix it," she proposed.

They walked through the hall in the office building to Mr. Roberts' office. He was out at the time.

"We will have to wait until he comes back," she noted. Let's go sit on the back step in the sun and eat our lunches." They seated themselves on the steps and she said, "You don't talk much, do you?"

"Well, I am not Superman in the talking department, I guess."

"When did you get home?" she asked.

"Last Wednesday."

"Been having a lot of fun?"

"Not much. Staying home visiting with Mom and Dad. Got out Saturday and bought me a new car."

"I will bet you painted the town red Saturday night."

"Stayed home and watched television," he replied.

"Say, what is wrong with you?"

"I guess I am one of the few that wasn't glad to get home."

"Why?" she asked.

"Well, you see I am . . . okay, here is the truth about it. My girl didn't wait for me."

She was quiet a moment, then said, "So, you got the 'Dear John' treatment?"

"Yes, and it hurts, too," he said.

"Yes, I guess it would. Have you seen her?"

"No, Clara . . . that's her name . . . called and invited me over to dinner some evening. Said she wanted me to meet her cousin who is staying with her. Probably some old maid nobody would have."

"What did you tell her?"

"Oh, I told her I would come over some time."

"Are you going?"

"No."

"Do you know her husband?"

Oh, sure. My best friend."

"Well, it always happens that way in books, anyway," she remarked.

"Looks like it is not only in books," he replied.

"You know? I think you should go visit them and give your blessing," she said.

"The only way I would go is to call her and ask if I could bring a friend, then go with a beautiful doll like you on my arm."

"Is that an invitation?" she asked.

"Yes, will you go with me?"

"No, I won't go because I don't believe you would be showing the right spirit," she replied.

"Well, that's the only way I would go," he said.

"I think you are acting small," she said.

"Say, I don't want to fight with you. I would like to take you out. May I?"

"I don't think so," she replied.

"Why not?"

"It's a lot of fun I would have going with you and listening to you talk about some girl you lost."

"A doll like you could make me forget her, awful quick."

DR. HULL TO HEAD HEART FUND DRIVE

Organization of 1956 Heart Fund drive is under way with the appointment of Dr. J. H. Hull, Torrance Heart Fund chairman.

Heart Fund Area Chairman, Dr. Jefferson L. Garner officially announced the appointment of the southwestern area community chairman at a breakfast meeting during Christmas week at Leuzinger high school in Lawndale.

An announcement will be made in regards to the appointment of the top leadership for the community drive to be conducted February 1 to 29, by the community chairman, Dr. J. H. Hull.

Volunteers Needed

All those interested in serving "Heart" are asked to contact Dr. Hull. A huge army of volunteers is needed in the 1956 Heart Fund drive. The death rate in regards to heart conditions reports that a striking shift is taking place in the ages of those who die of coronary heart disease.

Police Chase Nets Youths, Stolen Car

Two Waleria youths were arrested here last week after leading police on a 100-mile-an-hour chase in a stolen car through areas of North Torrance.

The youths were finally caught at 171st st. and Crenshaw Blvd., after running numerous stop signs and red traffic signals, as well as tearing across open fields in their car upon being cornered in dead-end streets on several occasions.

"You sound to me like your pride is hurt worse than your heart."

"You know, you may have something there," he said reflectively. "You see, that was a dread we all lived under over there. One of the main topics of conversation on long winter evenings around the tent."

"I guess it would be," she replied.

"I have seen some good men completely flip their lid with a 'Dear John' in their pocket."

"They didn't all take it that way, did they?"

"Oh, no. One boy got one. The girl asked for her picture, so they gathered every old pin-up they could find and sent them to her with a note that said, 'Forgot what you look like. Baby. Pick yours out and send the rest back.'

"Say, he really gave her a jolt!" she said with a smile.

"So you think I have been acting like a baby?" he asked.

"Yes, frankly I do, but then I have no room to be sarcastic with you about it."

"And why not?" he asked.

"Because I have been acting the same way."

"Tell me about it."

"Well, you see, my fiance was killed in action over there fifteen months ago, and I have not left the house to go anywhere except to work since it happened."

"And I have been crying on your neck about my troubles. Now I do feel little."

"That is all right. The thing for both of us to do it start over."

"Do I get the date?"

"Yes, you can take me home this evening if you want to."

"Good! Where will I meet you?"

"I will wait for you at Gate Number Three."

"I won't keep you waiting long," he said enthusiastically.

"I will call Clara and tell her I am bringing company for dinner."

"Clara?"

"Yes. You see, I am that old maid cousin of hers."

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